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SIGHT AND SOUND

VOL 13 NO 51

ARTICLES: MEXICAN CINEMA
CHINA'S DIFFICULTIES
THE SCREEN ENGLISHMAN
PRODUCTION IN EIRE
THE PERFECT PROJECTOR

CONTRIBUTORS: Keith Bean
Winifred Holmes
R. S. Lambert
Elizabeth Cross
B. E. Gillett

6^{D.}

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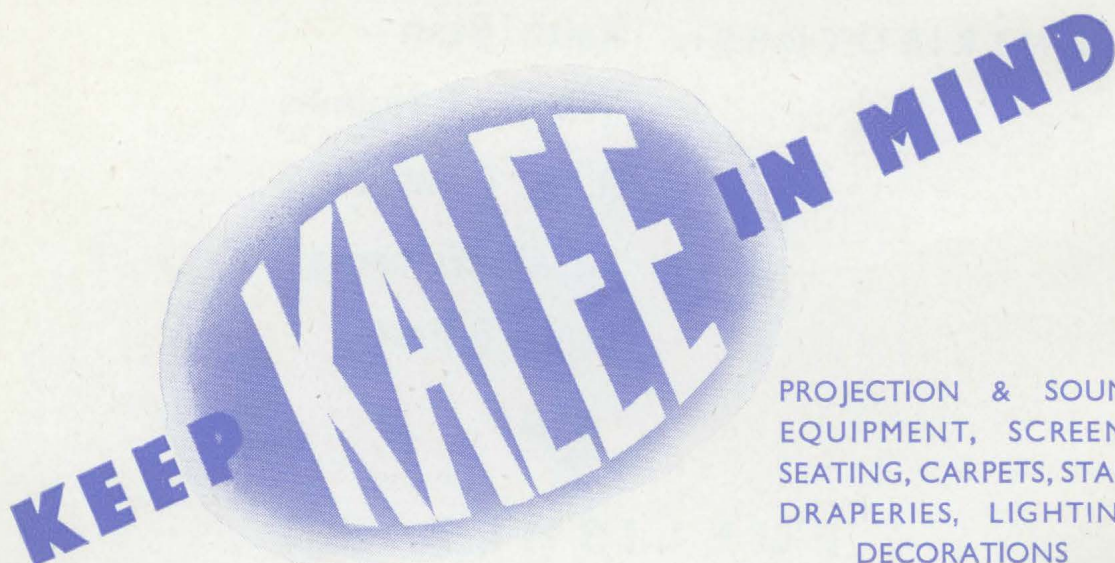
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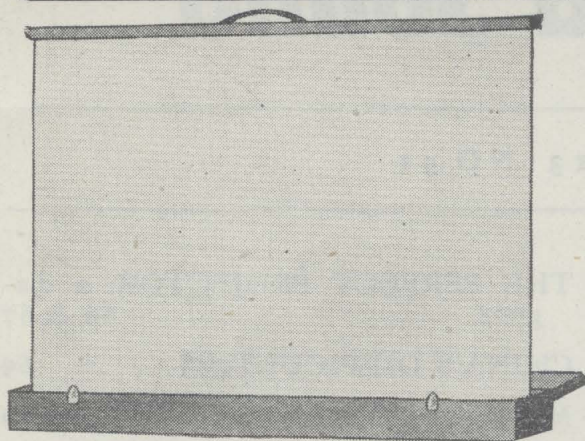
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Sight and Sound

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Mexican Cinema

Described by Ramon del Castillo

MUCH HAS been talked and written, during the last few months, about the efforts of the British film producers to get their product exhibited in the United States. During the same period the film producers of Mexico have been occupied by much the same question, but, whereas the British films are in direct competition with Hollywood products, the Mexican films are designed to fulfil the needs of the many hundreds of foreign language, and so-called "Arty" theatres in the larger centres of population in the States. These theatres used to run programmes of, predominantly, French films, but, owing to the increasing shortage of top-flight pre-Vichy films, the Mexican films have found an eager, and open, market. Cinemagoers have discovered that the Mexican film industry is greatly influenced by the French school of directors, and that it is now at the same stage of development as the Joinville studios in 1936, or thereabouts.

Well-known Names

Like Mr. Rank and Sir Alexander Korda, the film chiefs in Mexico City are anxious to use names familiar to the ordinary American filmgoer. Thus, the last year has seen the employment of Arturo De Cordoba, Mapy Cortes, Lupe Velez, Dolores Del Rio, in a series of pictures, while Hollywood has sent Norman Foster and his wife, Sally Blane, to direct and star respectively. Paul Lukas, Katina Paxinou, and Laurel and Hardy have also been named as artistes who would "go" in Spanish language features.

The American tour by Anna Neagle, with her *Queen Victoria* film in 1938, has also been duplicated by recent tours of the comedians, Leopoldo Ortin and Mario Moreno, and the

dramatic team of Arturo De Cordoba and Mapy Cortes, who form a combination that is as popular with the Latin American audiences as the erstwhile Powell-Loy partnership in Britain and the U.S. They all trekked through the great cities of the U.S. in the interests of their Spanish dialogued films.

This drive has received discreet backing from such bodies as the Committee of Inter-American Relations, but a vital factor in this advance in popularity is the polishing up of the technical side of the industry. Technicians have been imported from Hollywood by two of the leading studios, Clasa and Azteca, in order that they might train the studios' white hopes up to a Hollywood standard of efficiency, besides bolstering up those angles which were not up to much, especially costume designing and set construction.

Hollywood's Influence

The influence of these Hollywood technicians has had its effect on the quality of the film produced. Many mediocre films are still being turned out, consisting mainly of comedies and dramas of mother love, example: *The Eternal Secret*; but it is from eight or nine films expressing the spirit and faith of the Mexican peoples, that inspiration is drawn, helping to convince the creative talent that they are laying the foundation of a Mexican cinema of artistic worth and merit.

Loosening of the anti-religious measures has brought forth a number of films dealing with religious subjects due, no doubt, to the success of *Santa*, one of the first.

A huge success was scored by the filming of *St. Francis of Assisi*, and the same unit are now engaged in the pro-

duction of other religious subjects.

The industry is becoming increasingly aware of the artistic values to be found in racial backgrounds, and one of the most important films of the last few years is *The Virgin of Guadalupe*, dealing with the struggles between the Conquistadores and the Aztec Indians.

Filming Novels

In more conventional fields two literary works holding great promise were filmed, one successfully, the other not.

The successful screening of *Dona Barbara*, a novel of Venezuelan life by Romulo Gallegos, was one of the events of the year. This book is one of South America's great pieces of literature, and its author declared himself well satisfied with the adaptation. Seventy-five thousand dollars were expended on the production, which regained its initial cost within five weeks of its multi-theatre premiere in Mexico City.

Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* was lavish, with magnificent sets and elaborate costuming, the acting, direction, and camerawork was praiseworthy, but the whole thing fell flat owing to the slowness and wordiness.

Despite the failure of *Monte Cristo* the idea of filming a non-Mexican story has brought forward numerous imitators, and among the titles of films in various stages of production are *Camille*, Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, Florence Barkley's *The White Ladies of Worcester*, *Les Miserables* and *The Merry Widow*.

To balance this cycle, other Mexican producers are turning in the opposite direction, and delving into national history for themes. Completed are *Emilio Zapata*, the story of the Revolutionary general who introduced agrarianism into Mexico, and the life of Father Jose Maria Morelos, a General during the Mexican War of Independence, 1810-1821. In addition to these, Cecil B. De Mille is reputed to

be preparing for the fray with his story of the Mexican Constabulary, entitled *Rurales*, which has been shuttling back and forth between scripting and shelving for a couple of years.

The efforts of the Mexicans to become the dominating supplier of foreign language films to the United States has led to the drawing up, recently, of a morals code similar to that operating through the Hays Office. This code, drawn up by the Producers and Distributors of Mexican Motion Pictures, lays down that no film must introduce scenes that distort Mexican history so that the resultant sequences disparage Mexico; that debase the concept of matrimony; that debase the concept of the nation; or that glorify vice, crime, or hate for its own sake. In addition to the cleaning up of their own product this organisation assisted the Federal Government to prevent the widespread showing of immoral films originating from the north of the Rio Grande. These films were being made cheaply by American independent producers, after which they were smuggled over the border.

A Cinema Bank

Finance for the programme of films already mentioned is in the hands of two banks, the Banco Cinematografica, the industry's own bank which began operating in 1941 after five years of planning, and the French controlled National Bank of Mexico—a private banking house, despite its name.

The Mexican Government has realised the value of the film as a medium for propaganda, thus the Department of Fine Arts sponsored the Paul Strand *Pescados* (The Wave) in 1935; while, before that, they assisted Eisenstein when he shot *Thunder Over Mexico*. Lately they have interested themselves in the Herbert Kline-John Steinbeck documentary, *The Forgotten Village*, in which though few realise it the technicians were mainly Mexicans.

The sequence in which the village school-teacher borrows a projector from a neighbouring colleague, and exhibits a silent sub-standard film on the cause and prevention of disease, aptly demonstrates the good uses that are being made of the film as a medium for propagating educational ideas amongst the masses, still primitive and backward. Genuine efforts are really

being made to overcome this inertia with the setting up of units, along similar lines to those organised by the British Ministry of Information, to exhibit films on health, agriculture, etc. *The Forgotten Village* helps us to understand the mentality of the people with whom these units are dealing, and the obstacles they are endeavouring to overcome.

WINIFRED HOLMES MORALIZES

How many people, I wonder, accept the "giftie" of seeing themselves as others see them if it were in fact offered? As individuals we are inordinately sensitive and frightened of eavesdropping; way back in the nursery we were told that listeners never hear good of themselves and as individuals I believe most of us would refuse the two-edged gift. But as groups, nations, races, we rather enjoy looking at ourselves through other eyes, especially critical ones. It amuses, without touching us on a raw spot. Perhaps that is because as individuals we can accept group criticism while privately regarding ourselves as the rule-proving exceptions.

The Three C's

But whatever the reason it is true that the abuse by peripatetic foreigners of our three C's—climate, cooking, cabbage—is a best-seller, and even the charge of hypocrisy adds to our sense of superiority. 'Poor mutt, to be so taken in,' we think, smiling from out of the perfect certainty of being nothing of the kind. 'Poor mutt—but then he's only only a foreigner; he can't help it!'

A frontal assault like this we enjoy

and laugh off. What we do not care for is flattery, a false picture of ourselves in the heroic manner. It makes us uneasy. 'Good heavens, if that's what they think we're like—well we can't live up to it. We're anything but heroes; we're ornery.' Mrs. Miniver made most of us profoundly uncomfortable. We prefer the unheroic attempts to shuffle out of military service on the part of some of the new recruits in *The Way Ahead*.

Films about Foreigners

Making a film about another country, another people, is an almost impossible task. It has been done astonishingly well in *The Forgotten Village*, according to people who have lived in Mexico for many years and who know such villages intimately. But a Mexican villager himself, would he agree?

I should like to see *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in a Spanish cinema. Audience reactions would be enlightening. To me it is a grand romp by Hollywood extras in fancy dress among the Technicolour rocks and crags of Grand Canyon country—except for Pilar, who has a peasant vitality and coarse genuine life which is refreshing.

To an International Brigader who fought in similar campaigns it is a film of pure fantasy. Is it any the worse for that? A matter of taste, I think, as the film has no particular significance. Either you find it good entertainment or you do not. That is all.

But in the case of two films about Japan I have seen recently it does matter—and matter considerably. The first—*Daughter of the Samurai*—made by a German, Dr. Fanck, in 1933-34, gives us the idealised picture of Japan which so many Westerners take away with them after living there—a face of beauty, formal courtesy, self-discipline, restraint and charm which masks a very different being underneath.

Japan as she is

There is none of this charm and glamour about the Japanese-made film—*Prayer at Dawn*. In it you see a people as they see themselves and the effect is grim, humourless, cruel, insensitive, even sordid.

Coming away from *Daughter of the Samurai* you feel: 'What a delightful people; what a wonderful civilisation; they can't be guilty of the bestialities we read of to-day. How absurd to be fighting to destroy them when it is really we who are the barbarians in the art of living!'

But after *Prayer at Dawn* (significantly enough it was sponsored by the Japanese Government for home propaganda purposes, made in 1939) you come away disliking them intensely as a people and quite convinced that we must defeat them good and proper to prevent them imposing their hateful doctrines on others. Both films are perfect vehicles for Japanese ideals. It is the way the characters are interpreted—by a European and by one of themselves—which charms, or repels us.

The propaganda message of *Daughter of the Samurai* is—Japan for Japanese. 'Let us close our doors on

the rest of the world, particularly on the West with its alien culture and social structure, and become more thoroughly and traditionally Japanese. The traditions of Japan are the best—for Japan. The influence of the West is bad—for Japan. The craze for Westernisation is harmful; our young people must look inwards and not ape the ways of Europeans or intermarry with them.'

The daughter of the Samurai herself, a beautiful girl with all the grace and modesty Europeans find so appealing in leisured Japanese women is betrothed to her father's adopted son. The latter comes of a peasant family from up-country; this is a common practice among we 1-to-do families who have no heir.

Forming Character

The girl is brought up traditionally, undergoing a rigorous training in household management, cooking, embroidery, fencing, the classic, ritual manners and the repression of emotion.

In due course she and her father go to a Tokyo hotel to greet her fiancé who has just returned from Europe. But to their horror they find he has not returned alone, but is having a liaison with a German fraulein, a journalist, and has learned to admire everything Western and to despise the ancient traditions of his own country. This is a disturbing and humiliating situation. But their code of manners prevents them from making a scene. The girl is forbidden by her stern father to cry: "the daughter of the Samurai does not weep," but is forced to be friendly and polite to her rival in spite of a broken heart.

Feeling disgraced and heartbroken the daughter of the Samurai slips out of her ancestral home, bearing her wedding kimono in a neat package, and makes her way by train and on foot to the nearest volcano to commit honourable suicide, from which dis-

aster she is rescued in the nick of time by the hero.

The film ends with a perfect Japanese marriage in which everyone lives happy ever after: curiously enough, in the wilds of Mongolia, which our hero is taming with a tractor in the intervals of admiring their papoose-like baby laid reverently in a mud furrow by his pretty mother. ... needless to say a son and heir.

For all its absurdities this film is so magnificently photographed and the people in it are so likeable that you leave it a convinced pro-Japanese.

Quite the reverse is true of *Prayer at Dawn*, the Japanese-made propaganda film which provides an excellent antidote and is actually how the Japanese see themselves.

Glorifying War

Here the propaganda angle is the glory of dedicating yourself, or of being dedicated—man, horse or baby—to war. There is none of the glamour and external beauty of the German film here. The surroundings are drab. Except for one character, the young wife, the people portrayed are ugly, dour, swaggering or aggressive. In their relations with each other they lack the grace and tenderness Dr. Fanck has shown them as having in his rose-spectacled film.

The hero of the film is a horse—champion of a horse farm owned by an old woman, mother of two daughters. The husband and betrothed of the daughters are both called up; the horse requisitioned for a cavalry regiment. There are scenes of rejoicing as the new draft goes off for training. The young wife prays for the safe return of her man. But she must smile and cheer. not weep.

At the barracks, where the new recruits are trained, the first incident takes place which shows the real insensitivity of the Japanese to the feelings of others, which was evidently meant to be a screamingly funny

episode, but I found it revealingly revolting.

The cavalry regiment goes to the war in China, joining up with the infantry, who slog wearily along the dusty tracks of the huge country they are invading for the greater glory of their divine Emperor. These shots are the finest in the film and there is no attempt to glamourise anything but the dogged courage and perseverance of the Japanese foot soldier.

A Revolting Incident

But then comes the second incident which reveals this people's true character. A party of soldiers arrive at a poor Chinese farm and demand food from the woman there, who stands with her children round her, stunned at the intrusion. All the chickens are slaughtered in the courtyard, the eggs collected and the men devour their stolen food. These people eat like pigs and they do not mind letting us see it. Then they go on their way, blandly leaving the pitiful family to starve. In fact they have honoured the poor household by stripping it bare.

I found that none of the heroics of the climax of the film in which the Japanese troops show great heroism, particularly of course the chief characters, could take the taste of this incident from my mouth.

In spite of the dawn prayers of the young wife, her husband is killed—but killed leading the victorious attack on the Chinese walled city, an attack made possible by the important dispatch carried alone by the champion horse to Divisional H.Q. after its rider had been killed—a true Japanese horse, in fact. And instead of weeping the Japanese wife and mother dedicates her baby son to the glory of the Emperor, swearing to bring him up to be an honour to his heroic father.

Yes, showing ourselves as we see ourselves is often more unpleasantly revealing than as others see us—paradoxical as it may seem!

THE SCREEN ENGLISHMAN

EXPOSED BY R. S. LAMBERT

SOME READERS OF SIGHT AND SOUND may like to know what impression of England is being given by the numerous, technically excellent British films that come to us across the Atlantic. Here in Toronto, for instance, we have a good first-run house that shows almost exclusively British features; and these afterwards have a wide distribution in neighbouring theatres.

The composite picture of the "Old Country" which they are giving is a bit puzzling. They are well on their way toward creating a "stock" Englishman and "stock" English village that is no more the whole truth than the "stock" Irishman created 100 years ago by Lover or than the "stock" Aberdonian of popular anecdote.

Class Conscious

This film Englishman seems painfully aware that his Canadian and American cousins tend to regard him as standoffish and class-conscious. But the measures taken to offset this are backward—rather than forward-looking. The film Englishman takes care to make his universe revolve around some romantic village "pub" half-timbered in the Tudor style outside, approached by a Georgian coaching yard, and furnished inside after the style which compromises between William Morris and Cecil B. de Mille.

The social centre of this pub is its bar, where (in spite of war-time restrictions) liquor flows with a freedom suggestive of the Sorcerer's Apprentice—a freedom which is the envy of relatively dry Ontarian film-fans! Usually, this bar is infested with a type of folksey people who will not let a man drink his beer in peace, but insist in bursting at frequent intervals, nostalgically but irrelevantly, into music-hall ditties of the late Victorian or early Edwardian era. When this

runs dry, they may (if the scene of the film lies west of Oxford) croon Welsh hymns.

This Englishman is at pains to show that class barriers have disappeared in England ever since Dunkirk. However, the kind of "hearty" fraternisation that takes place between peer and butler, duchess and milkmaid, sportsman and bartender, clubman and costermonger, while each retains (and glories in) his traditional class characteristics—is so self-conscious, that it emphasises what it seeks to gloss over. It is likely to make Americans conclude that the old Adam is merely masquerading.

Types that we rarely see in British features are the factory girl, the Yorkshire miner or Staffordshire potter, the trade union official, the clerk in search of self-education, the suburbanite, the shepherd or teamster, the gardener—in fact, many of the most distinctive characters that are unfamiliar to Americans. Another point—why do we get no dialects but Cockney, Lancashire, Glasgow or the "Oxford accent"? We have yet to hear a West Country or East Anglian voice on the film.

Traditional

In brief, these films heavily emphasise the England of tradition, and avoid anything typical of progressive, changing, alert, up-to-date England, preparing to renew her youth in the post-war world. Obviously the appeal to tradition has its time and place—but has not the time now come for British film makers to emphasise the *progressive* instead of the *conservative*, in our national make up? SIGHT AND SOUND, most progressive among British film journals, can help to ventilate the subject.

Toronto, Canada.

A.C.2 AT THE TEACHIES

Observed by B. E. GILLETT

IT ALL began in the late Autumn of 1940. I happen to belong to one of the less spectacular commands of the Royal Air Force whose personnel are for the most part split up into isolated groups of ten or twelve, often out of reach of entertainment and always so staffed that an evening out could only be arranged at what seemed to be terrific intervals. I was fortunate to be at Flight H.Q. where we fared rather better than our colleagues on the Balloon sites, True, entertainments came at intervals to Squadron H.Q. and to these all who could be spared were allowed to go; sometimes transport was provided and sometimes one had to make one's own way to Squadron, which might be five miles away, and later make one's weary way back. The number of men who could be spared seldom averaged more than one per site and two was a very rare happening.

Initial Difficulties

So it was that I felt the system of Squadron shows fell short of meeting the requirements of such units. I suggested that we might have film shows on the site themselves, where the whole crew, and perhaps men from neighbouring sites, could pass an evening. My Flight Commander was enthusiastic and my own silent projector was soon in service. There were limitations: our choice of films was limited to those we could obtain without payment as there were no funds, and our choice of sites was limited to those fortunate enough to be equipped with electric light. So we started. The original members of the Squadron were drawn almost entirely from the professional and business classes and included clerks, accountants, teachers, solicitors, estate agents

and the like, and most were feeling how different Service life was from what they had been used to leading. Our programmes consisted of films from Central Film Library, from commercial organisations like Austin and Morris Motors, British Commercial Gas Association and the like, and from a Local Education Authority's film library. This might appear to be hard going for men thirsting for entertainment but it proved to be very acceptable. We usually started with a short, informal chat on the subject of each film and it usually fell to my lot to be commentator as well as projectionist. Sometimes a film was 'right up somebody's street' and then with a little persuasion we prevailed on that person to become commentator. No attempt was made to force discussion as one must go warily in starting such things, however, during the time taken to change reels someone invariably wanted to ask a question or comment on something which had been seen or said and so without seeking discussion we found ourselves led that way. The shows invariably ended with a hot supper prepared by one of the crew. These shows continued through the winter of 1940 and proved a great success.

Filling a need

The winter was quite severe and, apart from routine visits by officers, they were the only contacts the men got with the outside world. The chosen sites were visited in turn and each received approximately one visit in four weeks, but in spite of the weather it was quite common to find in one's audience men who had, after a gruelling day and with the prospect of an equally gruelling night, walked across snow-covered or rain-sodden fields to be present. The good fellowship among

sites was great and film night was always open house and somehow supper always went round however many arrived.

In the spring of 1941 my connection with the R.A.F. was temporarily severed and it was not until the winter of 1942 that circumstances permitted a resumption of the shows. But now there were many changes. W.A.A.F. had now replaced men to a very great extent and as they were able to get more time off from the sites it was anticipated that their desire and taste for entertainment might be different. Conditions were also different in that I now had at my disposal a sound projector which opened up new possibilities.

W.A.A.F. Tastes

We started by attempting to discover what were the tastes of the girls. The cost of hiring a feature film had been promised and a ballot on ten British feature films, representative of all types from Drama to Comedy, brought an interesting result. The three most popular films were Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*; *Scarlet Pimpernel* and René Clair's *The Ghost goes West*. Reasons for this choice in order of importance were (1) The story (2) The direction and (3) The stars. The very light entertainment came well down the list. This led us to believe that there was a definite demand for good film. These films were all shown and proved very popular. Our plans were now on a more ambitious scale, three shows of each programme were arranged weekly, one at Flight H.Q. and two others on sites chosen on convenient centres. Audiences were larger than in the earlier experiment partly because conditions were easier and we had the very enthusiastic backing of the officers. So we continued, but our resources were not sufficient to enable us to have a feature film every week. We decided therefore to alternate between features

and documentaries. At first the reaction of the girls was "We don't like documentaries," but strangely enough it was only a short time before attendances and enthusiasm were higher for documentaries than for features. Our documentary field was considerably enlarged now that we had sound and we included films like *The River*, *Song of Ceylon*, *Night Mail*, *The Londoners*, *Housing Problems*, *Men of the Lightship* and the non-theatrical version of *Target for Tonight*. In addition educationals were regularly included and such films as *Mediaeval Village*, *King Penguins*, *Asphalt Lake* and *Self Defence by Plants* were surprisingly well received.

Frank Discussion

Discussion of films shown steadily increased and improved and many of the controversial films started discussions which, had they been allowed to proceed, would have prevented a resumption of the show so we decided to arrange a special session devoted entirely to discussion and usually presided over by an officer. Discussion steadily improved and became free and frank and we all felt it was worth while.

Our shows were not without incident, occasionally an 'Alert' or 'Stand-by' came through in the middle of the show. The projector stopped, the crew, clad in gum-boots and oilskins, their numbers reinforced by clerks, drivers, telephonists and the like, clad in borrowed gum-boots and overalls—often of a very indifferent fit—raced out to attend to the balloon; invariably the operation was carried out in record time and everyone returned to the show. Only once were conditions so bad that the show was not resumed. A gale had sprung up and our balloon, together with others, was torn from its bed and wrecked; that night the projectionist and others equally uninitiated into the mysteries of ballooning finally got to bed at 03.00.

hours after assisting four other crews either to save or lose their balloons.

In spite of such distractions the shows continued and through the interest aroused we were able to introduce the subject of Film Appreciation, first by short references to good photography or cutting and later by definite talks on film editing. We now knew what was meant by "tempo", "quick cutting" etc. with the result that discussion was now not confined to subject matter but extended to composition and treatment, and films like *Distillation* could be included and enjoyed even though the subject matter was beyond many of the audience.

It was always our custom to advertise our programme and to include a short comment on each film so that no one was ever attracted by an interesting title only to find that the film bore no relation to the title. Attendance was always voluntary and no attempt was ever made to coerce or

compel people to attend; in addition it was an understood thing that training films were never pushed in. These points, I am convinced did much to assist in making the experiments successful.

One often hears it said that the cinema is very largely "escapist" in its appeal but my experiences have led me to believe that this is not entirely true. Our audiences might very excusably have demanded very different material from that we have used, and the success we experienced has shown that the more serious, thought-provoking film will, given the opportunity, attract an audience and encourage a less passive attitude to cinema going, and may steadily create a more critical attitude towards the fare offered at the local cinema. If this can be achieved, "Stupendous" "colossal" "mammoth" "gigantic" and other over-worked adjectives may be returned to their former and often more accurate meanings.

THE DISCIPLES OF PAN

By VICTOR STREETER

A TOPIC that will provide much useful discussion in film societies and at the same time stimulate the "filmic" senses to an extraordinary degree, is the comparison of two opposite methods of using the film camera. I refer to the stationary camera on the one hand, and the moving camera (*i.e.*, as used in tracking and panning) on the other.

So far cinema connoisseurs do not appear to have given much attention to this matter. Indeed, the only discussion of it I have encountered in books on film technique has been in Raymond Spottiswoode's *Grammar of the Film* (Faber & Faber, 1935). Its author notes with alarm the fact that "throughout the greater part of the

normal film" (my italics) the camera follows each character about

"as if terrified that he will escape. This is supposed to correspond to the mechanism of attention, the camera merely doing what the spectator would do . . . A little reflection will show that this is a gross travesty of the truth . . ."

Mr. Spottiswoode goes on to say that our habits of vision do not correspond at all with the panning of a camera. He affirms that we see things in a series of clear images "at each end of the eye-travel," interspersed with a totally unapprehended space, and that consequently the correct way of

constructing a film is to cut from shot to shot. The planning and tracking method, says Mr. Spottiswoode, "approximates closer and closer to the stage the more it is extended" (my italics again).

It is surprising to me that Hollywood has never taken up the literary challenge of the Russian directors and their unquestioning worshippers. So far I have failed to find in print the case for the moving camera. Perhaps one of its Hollywood backers might put it like this:

Your old-style director cuts his way from shot to shot till the audience becomes in effect not a normal observer but a very abnormal one with the blinks—an irresponsible lunatic who makes sudden springs right up to the players to look in their eyes, then jumps right on to the chandelier to look down at them all. If it "gets by" it's probably because the actors and cutters and script writers have done a good job; which doesn't excuse a director for making a tumbling monkey out of his public.

Does Panning Predominate:

Now examine the two cases. Do you agree that panning predominates in films? My own observations flatly contradict that assertion.

Do you agree that panning has no correspondence to our visual habits? Is Mr. Spottiswoode's description of the latter correct? My next question forms a pertinent clue to the above: What is the "defect" in human vision that made moving pictures possible?

Let us consider a few notable examples of panning and tracking.

Ten or twelve years ago Rouben Mamoulian opened the first sound version of *Jekyll and Hyde* by "walking" the camera about as though it were a person, till it came to a mirror and revealed that it was Dr. Jekyll (played by Fredric March). Thereafter however, this promising experiment

was abandoned and the rest of the film was given the normal "objectivist" treatment. Could an entire film be made with the audience "moving about" exactly as one of the characters would?

Now here is an example of panning for dramatic effect, from the work of Alfred Hitchcock. In *The 39 Steps* Mr. Hannay is being interviewed—"sympathetically"—by a Scots Sheriff. Some police officers arrive, and we see the Sheriff admitting them, leaving Hannay off-screen Right. "You don't suppose," says the Sheriff to his men "that I enjoy playing for time with a murderer?" Here the camera swings sharply Right and holds Hannay in medium shot, echoing "Murderer?" The effect of that quick panning is electrifying. There the director produced an emotional effect by reproducing the appropriate mechanical reaction in the spectators—he made us "look round" at Hannay.

Screen and Stage

Do you agree that panning and tracking "approximates closer and closer to the stage"? I don't. But in any case, has drama no place on the screen? Must cinema and stage be for ever at daggers drawn? Wouldn't it be wiser to say that the cinema has added new vistas to the theatre—and it couldn't have done so had there *been* no theatre? Why are studios called sound-"stages"? I'm asking questions all the way because the cinema's intelligentsia have a habit of making forthright dicta and coining such monstrous terms as ideological montage, which are enough to make even an Esperantist say "Long live Basic English!" Consider these words of a famous playwright, the late Henry Arthur Jones: "The film theatre is as wide as the world itself, as bustling and as varied." Note the word "theatre."

To sum up: are you for or against

an extension of what Mr. Spottiswoode calls "the method of flux"—i.e., the use of panning and tracking (which, incidentally, involves "heartbreaking rehearsal and micrometer positioning of camera players throughout a scene)? Or do you think the cut-and-splice method is better cinema—where the film is made rather on the cutting-room than the studio floor? Or is the usual mixture of both methods the final attainment of screen art?

To get a little nearer the bone of prejudice, let me ask: Is panning necessarily bad because Hollywood invented

it? (Let's be honest. I was lifted out of my seat by *The General Line* and told everybody that *The New Gulliver* was miles in advance of Disney, but that sort of enthusiasm isn't constructive.) Sidelight on this issue: Isn't it a fact that D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* had a run of ten years throughout the Soviet Union and was intensively studied by Russian film theorists?

To return to the subject under discussion: In which direction is direction to go? More and more "cuts," or less and less? In short—Should directors have track minds?

Keith Bean's Reflections

I have been moved to reflection on one of the fallacies among the dicta of my great predecessor. The fallacy: Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more; it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing . . .

I have been moved to reflection. Now I have been nudged and prodded to a querulous refutation, for although the world is full of fallacies and few are dangerous in themselves I spy danger in the widespread currency which this one has gained.

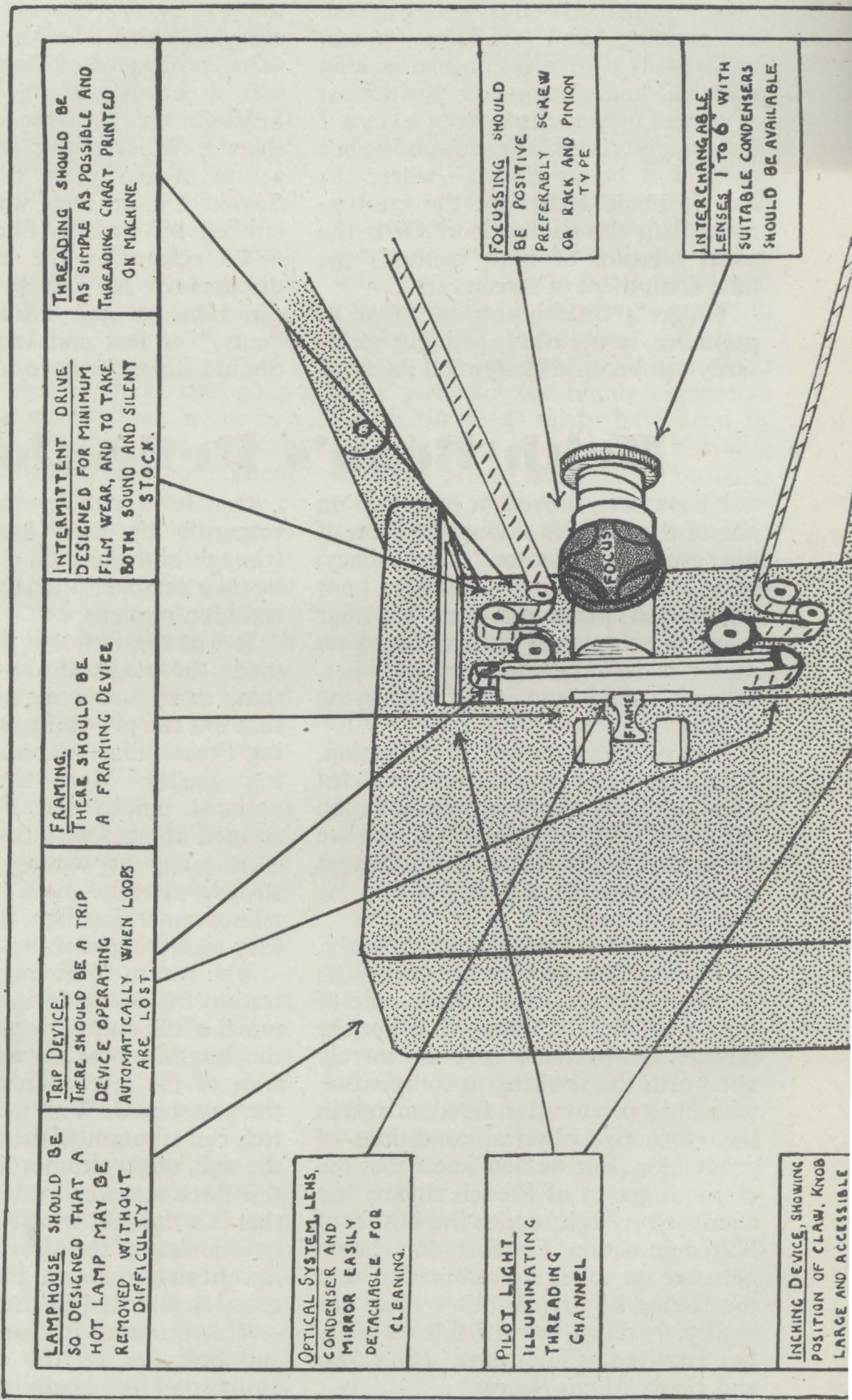
It was grand news to learn, reliably, of French film production under the German occupation. Perhaps some of these two hundred films will be for the salvage bin—collaborative or merely not worth the showing in competition with films produced in freedom and in less restrictive physical conditions of production. But we now know that the essential genius of French cinema has cherished its light under the bushel of Nazi domination. The first films shown here are an inspiring affirmation that the feeling of French film-makers for reality, for down-to-earth fidelity to life has survived. (The films: *Pontcarral* and *Goupi Mains Rouges*.)

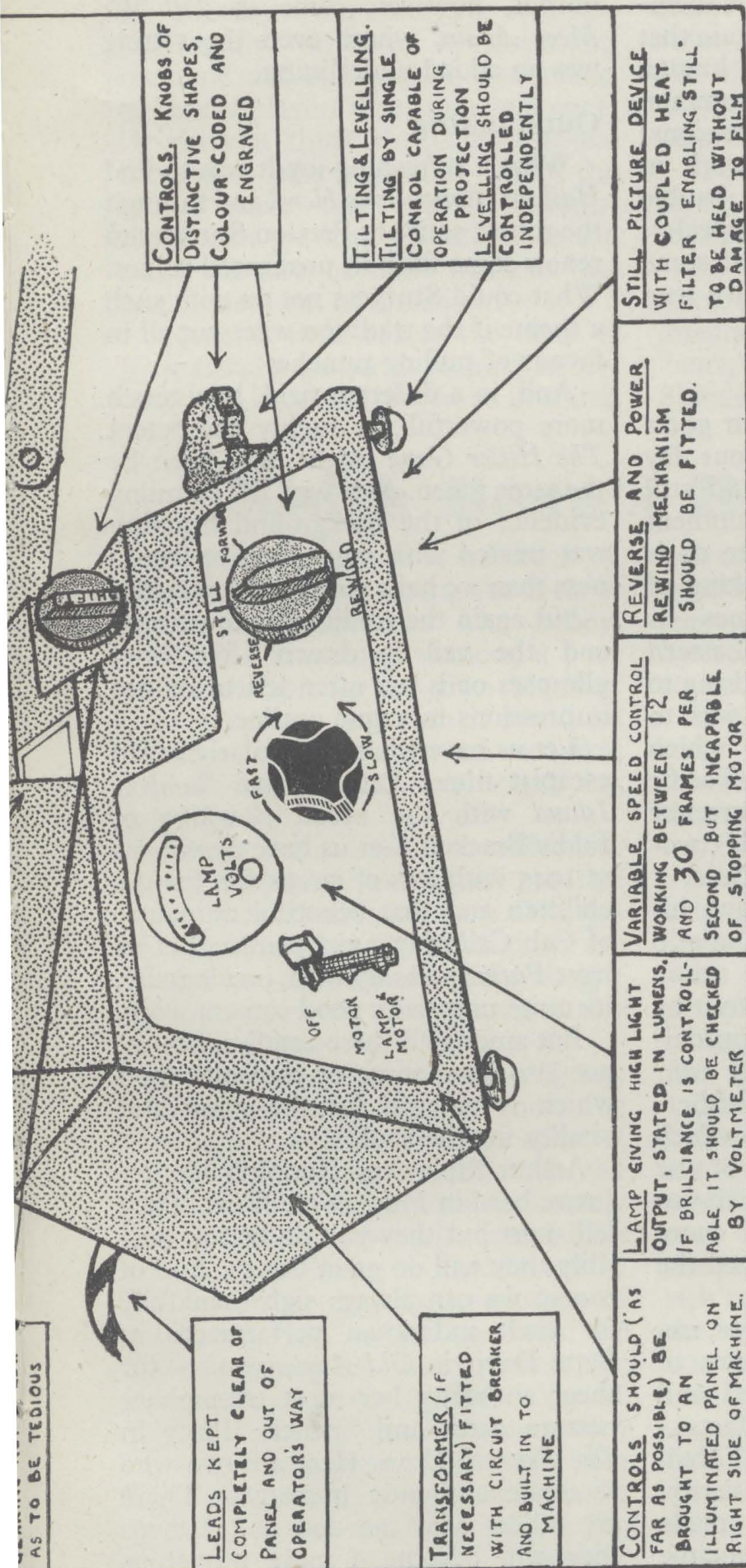
One is excited by these films not primarily by their intrinsic quality (though both rank f.a.q. at least), but by their demonstration that the national tradition remains.

It was the fact that French cinema made the magic shadow show something more than a tale told by an idiot that was the pre-eminent factor in giving French films a predictable satisfying quality. More than any other national output the French output seemed imbued with that spirit which—in gaiety or whimsy or satire or straight drama—made screen storytelling something more than sound and fury signifying nothing.

The return of French films to our screens throws up again the contrast of much of the output from the studios of the English-speaking world, the contrast of the three dimensional beside the pasteboard. With memories of the rich contribution of the French before the war, one welcomes the prospect of this force renewed in the cinema. And that is a thought which leads to closer questioning of the aims of British and American producers and the characteristics achieved in their product.

This question is frequently begged and befogged by the argument that Hollywood (for example) produces for





DESIRABLE FEATURES FOR EDUCATIONAL PROJECTORS.

the highest common denominator of a world market of many millions of film-goers. But Hollywood producers themselves have proved again and again that work informed with broad human values reaches that highest common denominator (in all its expressions) even more effectively than work in which the multiplication of bauble trappings is the basis of the appeal.

Let us take a second look at some of this quarter's films as we have seen them in England.

A Travesty

It may be that to many film goers a truthful picture of China in our day would be a shock—but it would still be full of that dramatic entertainment value which the pundits assure us is essential to the successful making of films. When that truth comes—as well it may before the Far Eastern war is over—it will be as surprising to Americans as Pearl Harbour was to them. Yet the pipe dreams which lulled Americans about their Pacific neighbours are given further currency in a series of beautiful postcards (two-pence coloured) called *Dragon Seed*.

Again, Henry Hathaway gave his *Wing and a Prayer* the enthralling grip of truth with magnificent action photography. What was added to it by the false heroics which marred approximately every second hundred feet? Nothing was added except a furtherance of that cloudy romanticism which sicklies the factual appreciation of war and thereby makes further wars so much the more likely. Even more effectively *I Love a Soldier* served the same unworthy purpose.

The realities of *The Hairy Ape*, except perhaps in the performance of Susan Hayward, were cluttered and lost by the same shrinking from facts—facts of sombre power which O'Neill fumbled with but which had verity. Tchekhov's *Summer Storm* was made commonplace on the same principle that life as the screen portrays it must

be a tale lacking significance. Perhaps the full horror of contrast with French output, however, came in *Till We Meet Again*, where even the setting was an added underlining.

Outstanding

What a refreshing joy it was to find *Hail the Conquering Hero*, and through the robust satire of Preston Sturges to renew some faith in unsugared values. What could Sturges not do with such a theme if the tradition were not all in favour of pulling punches . . .

And, in a different field, how much more powerful the highly competent *The Hitler Gang* might have been by the same token. As it was, the damning evidence of the background brutality was treated with more incisive frankness than we have seen for many a film—but again the tradition is too strong and the veil is drawn after brief glimpses or is too often left to reduce impressions to vague outline.

Let us have what is popularly called escapist films. Let us have *Rainbow Island* with the broad clowning of Eddie Bracken. Let us have *Sensations of 1945* with lots of circus fun for the children and that beautiful miniature of Cab Calloway's girl pianist. Let us have *Bathing Beauty* with, incidentally, its quite unusually good camera work.

But among all these candies, can we not also have some of the solid food which is vitamin for the mind and vitality for the soul?

Arthur Ripley and Rudolph Monter strove hard in *Voice in the Wind*. They fell short but they will do better: possibly they will do great things. And of course we can always sigh thankfully for such individual performances as Bette Davis in *Old Acquaintance*—for sheer authority her most triumphant best to date—and Spencer Tracy in *The Seventh Cross*. Here are two who re-create authentic humanity. There are others who can and do. Perhaps they will become a more numerous company

China's Difficulties^{*}

THERE ARE many educational institutions in China. The numbers of schools of various grades and for social education are as follows—

- (a) Higher Education institutions comprising universities, independent colleges and technical schools—138 in 1943.
- (b) Secondary Education including normal schools and vocational schools—3,187 in 1942.
- (c) Primary Education—292,252 in 1943.
- (d) Social Education—78,445 in 1941.

So far as visual education is concerned films and lantern slides used to be the most important. As to films, silents form the greater part though occasionally sound films were also used. Whether they are sound or silent, however, all are on the 16 mm. gauge. During the war the loss of equipment has been heavy and owing to the difficulty of replacement, supplies are becoming very scarce.

Gramophones are used for two purposes. First to teach the standard pronunciation of the Chinese language and secondly to provide entertainment, but the former is the more important. Schools which have equipment are as yet few but nearly all institutions for social education have been provided with gramophones.

As to broadcasting educational programmes are provided by the education authorities of the central government and of the provincial and municipal governments. In the case of the central government, the Ministry of Education undertakes to deliver three lectures a week each lasting 15 minutes through the Central Broadcasting station. The subjects of these talks are aimed at youth, children, the general public, people in military zones and people in the outlying districts. Announcement of these programmes is

made in advance and directions are sent to schools and institutions with receiving sets to tune in at the scheduled time either for the purpose of assisting regular teaching or with a view to educating the general public on certain subjects. About 3,000 schools have been equipped. Provinces and Municipalities have their own stations from which educational broadcasts are also being sent out.

Most of the visual aids are distributed annually to all educational institutions by the Central Government. Some of the material used is made by the teachers themselves. In addition gramophones, radio sets, diascopes, films and slides are made at home but film projectors have to be obtained from abroad.

Besides the appropriations for the Central Broadcasting station, the International Broadcasting station, the Central Film studio and China Film Factory, the annual cost of films and broadcasting listed under the Ministry of Education vote amounts to \$3,720,000 in 1943 and \$5,146,000 in 1944. The cost of the provincial and municipal services is over and above this figure.

After the war, not only will the schools and other educational institutions which have been destroyed have to be got going again, but the Government intends that there shall also be a great expansion of the mass education movement. To meet this demand there will be an urgent need for visual aids as well as radio sets. One of the problems before the United Nations is to make plans to find the necessary equipment to enable this expansion to take place as quickly as possible.

^{*} Based on information supplied to the Films and Visual Aids Commission of the Conference of Inter-Allied Ministers of Education.

MORE CARPING

From Elizabeth Cross

WHEN I go to the theatre to see one of Mr. Noel Coward's plays I hardly expect to listen to a short lecture on the Lesser Mugwort before the curtain rises. Neither, when I am all set to see 'Hamlet', do I anticipate a session with Tommy Handley either before or after. Then, why, oh why, must we be regaled with various shorts of usually dubious quality before the main picture is shown? Presumably it is a relic of the old days when feature films were all of so moderate a length that no audience could be expected to have had its money's worth either in entertainment, hand-holding, or merely sitting down, after viewing just one. In those far-off times you simply had to have a 'programme' which was in reality a cinema version of a variety show, revue, or music hall, whatever you like to call it. There just weren't any films long enough to justify their being shown in solitary grandeur.

Why not a Single Feature?

Now it is different, and there seems no logical reason why we shouldn't be shown one really full-length film, without any tiresome cuts, and then let out again. There are, no doubt, various degraded souls (not that I have ever met them) who like to listen to the commentators of travel films, or laugh at the revolting jokes in the Nature Marvels. Presuming that these people do exist, well, why not let them give their foul tastes full sway. Let their be programmes clearly marked 'Variety' for them to revel in, filled with short shorts, with bright shots of the wizard king who can play ten tunes on so many golf-balls, and interviews with the man who makes his wife's hats out of discarded saucepans, to say nothing of those scenery pictures that start off, 'Away, far, far, away from

the madding crowd, in a hidden haunt of Nature's Wonderland. . . '. Well, you know all the sort of thing, with a few of the lousier cartoons as a make-weight, a musical feature of a potted symphony with most distracting shots of the flautist in labour and the conductor in peril, and a very unfunny comic about two couples who keep mistaking the apartment they sleep in and getting involved in each others beds. However, I could go on for hours detailing the short nasty films that could be gathered into one exhausting programme and swallowed right down, just like that. The point is to get rid of these horrors from the regular programmes, so that when I (and quite a lot of other right minded folk) feel disposed to go and take a dose of Miss Bette Davis or, in more exalted moments still, Mr. Orson Welles, we should not have to endure what we do now.

Patrons' Woes

And what do we endure? You may well ask, even in that sneering tone of voice. We endure one of two unpleasant experiences; one we hang about uneasily in the vestibule (that is when there is any likelihood of us being able to get a seat except at the orthodox time with the rest of the queue) until the 'big picture' is due, and then shove our way past protesting knees, often to lose the first pregnant sentences that have fallen from the player's lips (sometimes, but not often, this is sufficient to confuse us as to the whole issue for the rest of the evening.) Or two, we daren't risk trying to get in at the right time, or couldn't anyway, so we have to put up with the rest of the programme and have a splitting headache so that we can't imagine what we came for anyway and so go out before the main picture is

half through. A good time is not spent by us, you bet.

What really interests me is the mysterious mentality of those who compile programmes. How do they do it? Can it be that they still work on the old system used by film renters in the days when Mary Pickford was something fresh and strange. This system, in case some young person might care to know, was something like this. The Office had a regular order from the Picture Palace at Toad-in-the-Hole to supply them with a general programme, to be changed once weekly. Often this programme was left to their entire discretion, although the manager might (if he could read) go through the catalogue and indicate that he wanted *The Great Train Mystery* or *Rover's Rescue* sooner or later. Well, if he was lucky he'd get *The Great Train Mystery*, which was hot stuff containing a real train, but he'd have to take *Famous Tombs in Westminster Abbey*, and the very worn copy of *A Journey to Cheddar Gorge* which broke in three places regularly, and no making a fuss about it either. For it was a definite fact that in the neatly labelled tins of films there would be ten that no one could possibly want to see for every one that was really popular. Well, I suppose it's just the same now.

Why, oh, Why?

Last mystery, however, why do they make these films? I mean the ones that I don't want to see, and that make you sick and that most people use as an opportunity to cough, wriggle, whisper to Aunt Fanny and ask if she really did turn the oven gas out. But there again possibly there are millions and millions of people who would rather pay good money to see bad new films rather than re-see good old ones. Well, all I can say is, let them see them, but please devise some method by which the other millions who don't want to see

them can avoid them.

Finally, perhaps, I should end my carping by pointing out that I'm not pleading for more and more super-films of a high-brow nature. I have no desire to improve my fellow-creatures, if they prefer musical comedy films to documentary they have my sincerest blessings and full permission to go and watch lovely ladies opening their mouths to their utmost. But, and here I do use capital letters, Let All Films Be Good of Their Kind. After all, most people enjoy detective stories as well as other fiction or belles lettres, but they all fight for a Dorothy Sayers and not just any old murder. So why not make some attempt to raise the general standard of films in general? There are bad English films and bad American films. They have a different type of badness; possibly the English are more sickently amateur and full of disgusting young actors and actresses who were ever so good in their school plays and are ever so refined and speak *beautifully* even when they have to drop their aitches in a character part, but the American can claim a peculiarly amazing stupidity and make a nastier noise.

It may be as well not to mention the Cinema Organ. A very great number of people like it. However, as one who fights for the oppressed minorities, I do feel it would be a great step forward in our democracy if this particular form of self-indulgence were to be placed at the beginning or end of the programme so that those who do not wish to partake could stay out of earshot—or the management might provide ear-plugs.

Erratum

In Mr. David Welsh's article on *Teacher Film Makers* on p. 45 of our last issue, by mistake we indicated that *The Cat and the Kittens*, a film intended for infants and juniors, went into production for £31. The figure should have read £3.

PRODUCTION IN EIRE

By Peter G. Sherry

MOST EXCITING film news of the year was a decision by the Irish Government's Department of Supplies to finance a documentary on wheat production. The object was to give the consumer a knowledge of what wheat production entailed; to reveal to the farmer how essential it is in these days of war that wheat should be produced in a country whose imports have been cut to the bone. The making of the documentary was entrusted to a new organisation, the National Film Unit of Ireland; the latter body, backed by business men, obtained as director an independent producer, Richard Hayward. Two technicians, the cameraman and his assistant, were obtained from the Irish Film Society's School of Film Technique. As a gesture from the Trade to Irish Film Production, the documentary, finally called *Tomorrow's Bread*, was distributed free of charge throughout the country in two copies, one with an English, the other with a Gaelic, commentary.

Whilst such a move on the part of the Government is to be applauded certain facts are to be deprecated. Firstly, diplomatically no attitude was taken on the important social problems uncovered in the course of the film; secondly, no proper shooting script could be formulated, technicians having to go on day-to-day requests from the Department to film this or that branch of wheat growing and bread making.

A National Style

Despite the relatively small proportion of films produced in Ireland by Irish people, it is possible to observe certain traits of style. It would appear that the documentary film—which necessitates a cold, reasoned survey of facts, a mind which will not be swayed

one way or the other by emotionalism; and a firm grasp of the dialectical method—is not a type of film which comes naturally to Irish film makers. The Irish temperament is too volatile and does not take kindly to purely objective reasoning.

Another documentary, this time on 16 mm., is in the shooting stage at present. It is being sponsored by a semi-governmental body, the Irish Turf Development Board, and is being made by the same two technicians, Geoffrey Dalton and Kevin O'Kelly, who worked on *Tomorrow's Bread*. It is designed to educate workers in both the old-fashioned manual method of winning turf and the newer, highly mechanised systems of the Clonsast Bog. . . . It is expected that the film will be edited and ready for showing in November of this year.

Extra-Dublin Activity

While the latter two productions were centred around Dublin, industrial and intellectual hub of Ireland, news has come from further south of film production by a young man, David Nolan. Only 24 years of age, he founded in Waterford a corporation called "Elba Productions". He started a film in the manner of the *Passing Parade* on the life of Thomas Moore, but was unfortunately compelled to stop by a cessation in the supply of 35 mm. raw stock to Ireland. Meanwhile, the "Elba Productions" have branched out into the distribution side of the film business. They have acquired the film rights in Ireland of such films as *Dr. Mabuse* and *Brief Ecstasy*. The aim of "Elba Distribution" is to give a fair deal to the Irish independent exhibitor.

The Unit of the Irish Film Society remains as the only active amateur pro-

duction group. Personnel is recruited from a Film School financed and organised by the Irish Film Society. Last summer they made a short scenic entitled *Tibradden*, and aimed at achieving a high standard of photography, a slickness of continuity, and a general standard of production approaching that of the professional. Encouraged by results a story film *Mannon's Acre* was next attempted. With a documentary background, the film tells in story form of the continuous flight of rural workers from the Irish farms to cities and to England. It will last 30 minutes and is the Society's most ambitious effort so far.

Liam O'Laoghaire, founder of the Irish Film Society and for many years key-man of Irish film affairs, last year filmed a record of the methods of modern dance, entitled *Dance School*, and is this year producing a teaching film *This Farm is ours* for the Children's

Film Committee of the Irish Film Society.

The year has also seen the announcement in the national press of plans by different organisations for the further development of the film in Ireland. For a few weeks there is talk; then silence. The planners, national and post-war, suffer from a defect that is common to most such planners. They are people who talk about films and film production; who write about films and film production; but who are not film producers themselves.

For the film to develop in Ireland the active artists, technicians and actors must take steps similar to those of the English documentary movement; they must organise themselves; they must rely, not on some temporary opportunist alliance with the czars of big time production, but on their own sincerity and integrity; they must find their own channels of distribution even if it means hauling a sub-standard projector from town to village hall.

Children's Likes and Dislikes

By R. R. ZANKER

Hon. Sec. Chester Film Society

ONE OF the objects of the Chester Film Society is to promote special exhibitions of educational and cultural films for children. Although the Society is young it has been found possible to make a start with two children's performances in the Society's second season. It is not pretended that any conclusions arrived at after these two shows are far-reaching or of great importance, but they are recorded in the hope that they may be of use and interest to those who may be thinking of doing similar work. While some of the information gleaned is sociological it is

felt that all of it helps to illustrate the child's attitude to the cinema. The first show was given to 400 senior children from the elementary schools, though by some means a few juniors succeeded in attending. There were very few stewards, which made for normal cinema conditions and a live audience. A week later a questionnaire was sent out to a cross-section of the audience. It was headed Boy/Girl and the children were asked to cross out whichever did not apply. Apart from this the answers were anonymous. The only instruction was "Please answer

these questions honestly". 97 boys and 45 girls answered the questions. The show was preceded by half an hour's light music. No mention of the music was made to the audience. To the question "Did you listen to the music before the show?" 15 said they couldn't hear it, 40 listened, of whom 28 said they enjoyed it, 75 did not listen and were mostly content with the bald answer "No". Only 2 asked for dance music. 10 ignored the question. Two comments were:—I heard the music but didn't take any notice. No, but I am glad it was there because of the atmosphere it makes. The films shown were: *Dry Dock* (showing the construction of the world's largest dry dock); *Diving* (an instructional swimming film); *Beaver People* (a silent Grey Owl picture); *The People's Land* (a film of the National Trust in technicolor); *Mites and Monsters* (a film on the relative sizes of living creatures with commentary by Dr. Julian Huxley); *The Champion* (a silent Chaplin film).

Chaplin Wins

They were shown in that order, and the children were asked to place them in order of merit. On a straight vote the result was:—*The Champion* 44, *People's Land* 36, *Diving* 27, *Dry Dock* 25, *Beaver People* and *Mites and Monsters* 5 each. On a proportionate vote the result was:—*People's Land* 558, *Diving* 557, *Dry Dock* 535, *Champion* 530, *Mites and Monsters* 367, *Beaver People* 364. There was a marked cleavage of opinion between boys and girls as regards Chaplin. Of 97 boys 35 put *The Champion* first; of 45 girls 24 put it last.

Although the questions were not asked till a week after the show no one seemed to have any difficulty in remembering the films. It is strange to find *Mites and Monsters* so low in the list as it seemed to be followed more closely than the other films. The idea behind it, of surface area in relation to

bulk, may have been too difficult to grasp, though one boy gave it first place because it made simple an idea which had hitherto been too elusive for him. The slow motion photography in *Diving* was generally regarded as funny, and as an opportunity to imitate dive-bombing.

Types Liked

Reasons for liking or disliking the films were too vague to be of value. The question "Were there any types of films you would like to see and which we did not show?" brought 36 different groups of answers ranging from a film on how to tell your enemies 1, to nature 17, football 18, air pictures 20, foreign countries 21. A number asked for longer films of the story type.

Question 7 was difficult to frame without suggesting an answer. It was "Did you notice anything about the behaviour of the audience?" 18 praised the behaviour. 60 said it was ordinary. 40 mentioned noise, such as whistling, but did not condemn it. 12 said the behaviour was bad. Comments range through:—I think the audience was more appreciative than the ordinary audience and enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Very happy. It was very good for the age of the children. No. You always find talking at these kind of shows. They behaved in a very uncouth manner.

To the question, "Would you pay to see a similar show?" 120 answered yes; 22 answered no. As one of the latter group wrote, "You could not forget yourself".

The secondary show was organised on similar lines to the elementary one. The programme was:—*Drawings that Walk and Talk*, a history of the cartoon. *How Talkies Talk*. *Papageno*, a Lotte Reiniger cartoon. *The Crawl*, an instructional swimming film. *The Champion*.

On a straight vote the order of

popularity was:—*Drawings that Walk and Talk*, 28; *Papageno*, 25; *The Champion and The Crawl*, 24; *How Talkies Talk*, 18.

On a proportionate vote the result was:—*Drawings that Walk and Talk*, 387; *The Champion*, 374; *The Crawl*, 350; *Papageno*, 336; *How Talkies Talk*, 329. Here again there were marked differences between the placings of boys and girls. Of 36 girls 13 put *Papageno* first and 5 last. Of 37 boys 1 put it first and 19 last. Of 36 girls none put *How Talkies Talk* first; 9 put it last. Of 37 boys 12 put it first and 3 last. Likes and dislikes were again too vague to classify.

Requests were:—Geography and Travel, 19; Mystery and Adventure, 17; animal stories (chiefly horses), 13;

films based on stories (by good authors), 11; history, 8; sport, 6; flying, 5; the sea, 2; war and musical comedy, 1 each.

Sixty-nine out of 119 listened to the music. 60 enjoyed it. Two comments were:—The music must have been good because I didn't notice it, and "I came to see films". 108 were willing to pay to see similar programmes; 2 were doubtful; 9 were unwilling.

Under the heading "Any other suggestions" one asked for a film illustrating the bad in films in contrast to the good. Another suggested a Crime does not pay to discourage juvenile delinquency. A third wrote "I think I shall have a better choice of films in future". 10 asked for a Junior Film Society.

Films in the Junior Technical School

By JOHN SCUPHAM

ITS FREEDOM from external examinations gives the Junior Technical school a great opportunity. It is free to experiment, and need not maintain any rigid barriers between "subjects", conceived and taught on academic lines. Its ends are not determined by the arbitrary demands of the School Certificate, but spring naturally from the interests of boys and girls who have chosen their vocation, and will respond to any curriculum that satisfies their sense of purpose and relevance. It is a major task of the school to ensure that the education it gives is not narrowly vocational, to nurture a new humanism of the craftsman and the technician, the builder and the engineer. For this purpose the film is a powerful instrument.

This article tries to show how the Cambridgeshire Technical School approaches the task, working under the limitations imposed by the difficulty of

obtaining films in wartime, and the unfortunately narrow range of material available for a silent projector.

The films are shown in "English" periods to fifteen-year-old boys who are training to be builders or engineers, and who spend a third of their time in the workshops. The year's programme is integrated with the work in English, which in its turn is broadly related to the vocational training. Throughout the year films are used as occasion arises to supplement the work of the classroom: *Steel or White Lead Paint* to illustrate an industrial process that has already been studied, *Lancashire, Home of Industry* to supply a background for the reading of James Nasmyth's *Autobiography*, *Progress* to serve as epilogue to a series of broadcasts. And in the last term of the year the film is called into revise and reinforce and clarify what has been implicit in the year's work, and to

serve as a basis for discussion and further reading.

The building sections have studied that perfect picture of the older craftsmanship and the village world that was its setting, Stuart's *The Wheelwright's Shop*. They have traced the transition from pre-industrial to modern England in Badmin's *Town and Village* and Tubbs's *Living in Cities*, which has made them familiar also with the urgent problems of physical reconstruction after the war. The theme of their first group of films is craftsmanship; in *Bwamba* the crude craftsmanship in wood of a primitive and isolated East African community with simple tools and little division of labour; in *The Wheelwright* a developed craftsmanship, the product of a long tradition, holding fast to the values of that tradition, but not disdaining the use of new tools and processes that Sturt never knew (and to note the differences is a fascinating exercise in observation and comparison); and finally, in *Timber*, the modified craftsmanship of the machine age and the new world-economy, leaving the boys to strike the balance of gain and loss.

The Larger Context

The work of the craftsman, new or old, fits into a larger context; the carpenter or mason is helping to build not merely a house, but a city, noble or ignoble. Fortunate in their native town the boys have been shown an unspoilt legacy, and a persisting tradition of urban grace and dignity; they know, too, that an unmistakably "modern" building like Impington Village College can worthily maintain that tradition; they have learnt from books and buildings something of the changing styles of architecture. And so the second programme deals with the city; *Rome* and the grand manner, the formal dignity of *Bath*, the Gothic glories of *Cathedrals of England*. With these still in mind as standards, the group goes on to consider our own immediate prob-

lems of rebuilding and slum-clearance, of worthy housing and the planning of town and country; and to see how new materials and changing social purposes can determine new styles, yet conform to what is best in a long tradition. They see the practical details of *How to Plan a Kitchen*, while *Building Dreams* and *Silver Lining* lead them to think of the wider aspects of the life of the community, and of the relation of building to education, to the social services, and to the vast and complex problems of unemployment. And finally, having seen their own chosen work in some kind of social and historical perspective, they turn aside for a rapid review of the other man's job, the other parts of an interlocking whole, to *Farming in East Anglia* and *Coal and Drifters*.

The same type of scheme is used with the engineers; they, too, are interested in craftsmanship and mass-production; but their special study for a year has been the significance of science in the modern world, its application in industry, and its impact on the life and thought of Everyman.

Films Lead to Reading

The success of the experiment can be measured not only by the keenness of discussion, but perhaps more significantly by the desire to read, and an essential factor in its success is leisured access to a well-stocked library, and guidance in the choice of books. There should be craftsmen's books, books of architecture, practical books for builders and engineers, industrial surveys, industrial and scientific biographies, books on town planning, books of science, novels.

It is the greatest merit of films in schools that while each of them appeals to the general interest of the class, it has its own special significance for a few; and the advantage of such grouped programmes as have been outlined here is that they can encourage both breadth and depth of interest.

Notes & News

British Film Institute

The two courses at Bangor, the first on Visual Education and the second on Film Appreciation, were both a great success. The level of all the lectures was of a very high order and each was followed by a lively discussion. The appetite of the students for seeing films seemed to be insatiable and even when the ordinary evening programme came to an end, members were found who continued to run through films for themselves and their friends until well into the night.

Each course could have been filled three or four times over. The Governors have been so impressed with the demand that they hope to run four weeks of summer school next year. One fortnight will again be at Bangor if the University College authorities can fit in a date. The other will be in the Midlands or the South of England.

The Institute intends to publish full summaries of the lectures as soon as possible so that not only the students who were there but members of the Institute and others can have a record of the experts' views to-day on these two important subjects.

The Governors wish to draw readers' attention to the publication of a new pamphlet, "The Elements of Film Criticism" (2s. 6d.). The booklet in the preparation of which the Institute had the able assistance of Mr. Clarke, the Youth Organiser of Wembley, is based on his experience in introducing the subject to young people both in that borough and in other places where he has worked. There is a bibliography. In another appendix are included articles on their personal approach to their craft written for this magazine by well known film critics.

Following on a question at the end of July addressed to the Minister of Education by Sir William Brass, M.P., the chairman of the Governing Body of the Institute, the Governors have been invited shortly to go to the Ministry to discuss the future of educational films and in particular to arrive at an understanding of the functions of the Ministry and the Film Institute in regard to post-war developments.

A new committee has been established for reviewing background films in the *Monthly Film Bulletin*. As in the case of other viewing committees its membership represents as nearly as possible the views of all users of the background and documentary type of film.

Miss Grayson, the Institute's travelling representative, continues her work with Training Colleges. She has also been instrumental in getting going an experimental scheme in film appreciation in six Sheffield clubs and one secondary school in the same city.

As a result of the recommendations with regard to visual education contained in the McNair Report on the training of teachers, the Institute has been asked to meet the executive committee of the Association of Training Colleges and Departments of Education and discuss what might be done.

The National Film Library

Nearly fifty recent feature films have been added to the preservation section of the National Film Library. Once again the thanks of the Institute have to be extended to their donors, Messrs. R.K.O., G.F.D., British Lion, M.G.M., Warners, Paramount, and Anglo-American.

The cataloguing and indexing of the Library's films is making steady progress. Practically all the news items with collection have been fully indexed and catalogued in the last few months. A number of features including all recent additions have been catalogued.

So much data have been collected as a result of the chemical tests which are being

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applied to films to test their condition from the point of view of deterioration that it is hoped shortly to publish an account for the learned societies' journals.

Borrowings from the Loan Section continue to reach new high levels. The following films have been sent to the printers to be duped and copied for adding to the existing list of 110 titles in the Section:—*Turksib*, *The Italian Straw Hat*, *L'Atalante*, *Warning Shadows*, *Waxworks*, Lotte Reiniger's *Carmen* and a number of early shorts, including a Broncho Billy Anderson western, a Harold Lloyd comedy and a Keystone comedy.

Film Council of the South-West

During the six months ending September 30th, the Film Council of the South-West, in close association with the Visual Education Centre, carried on the following activities:

The programme of research was completed.

The research results were presented in July at a conference representing the B.F.I., the Board of Education, Museums, L.E.A.'s, the Film Council, local schools, and the University College of the South-West.

A Teachers' Course was provided during the summer on "Film, Photograph and Film-strip", and was well attended by teachers from Exeter and Plymouth.

Film shows and demonstrations of Visual Education have been provided for History teachers, the Domestic Front, Canadian Forces, the Army and A.T.S., Exeter psychiatrists, the Association of Scientific Workers, the Post-War Society and other bodies.

The General Committee have decided on a programme of local expansion. Local branches are to be set up and developed by local initiative. The first step—discovering and bringing together energetic conveners—has already been taken.

Bradford Civic Theatre

The Bradford Civic Playhouse opened its new autumn season at the beginning of September. Four films have been chosen for public showing during the months of September and October, making up a varied and interesting programme. *Thunder Rock* was exceptionally interesting to our audiences, who had a vivid recollection of the production of the play on our stage a couple of years ago. Those who had seen the play agreed that the film added nothing, and many maintained that much had been lost in its translation into a film. Is anything gained by filling in details of

the past lives of the characters, suggested so vividly and with such artistic economy in the original stage version? And surely something important was lost by the omission of the fine original ending? The whole question arises as to whether the cinema should ever use plays written for the stage. Other films in our programmes are a revival of *Entree des Artistes*, with *I Want to be an Actress* shown on the same programme; *Cabin in the Sky* and *Le Jour se Leve*. Our Film Society has its first show soon, and has chosen *Battle for Music* for the opening night.

Chester Film Society

The Chester Film Society has concluded its first full season. Membership is satisfactory, but it is hoped that with the easing of war-time duties there will be a considerable increase during the coming season.

Films to be shown are *Le Bonheur*, *Citizen Kane* and *Le Roman d'un Tricheur*.

Last season two experimental children's shows were given. It is hoped to give four this coming period.

Devon and Exeter Film Society

The Society has started a new season with increased membership. Conditions still prevent any return to 35 mm. films, but an interesting season of substandard films had been planned. It began with *South Riding* on October 11th. Its revivals will include the *Chess Player*, the *Straw Hat*, *Faust* and *Rembrandt*. Mr. Stuart Keen, who recently described in SIGHT AND SOUND his technique of synchronised music with silent classics, is providing several of the programmes.

A PRIVILEGE

Full Members of the British Film Institute can now borrow books from the Loan Section of the Library on payment of postage both ways.

The Reference Section can be consulted by callers at the Institute's Offices.

A full catalogue of the books in both sections can be obtained from the

B.F.I., 4, Great Russell Street
London W.C.1. Price 6d.

Ayrshire Film Society

Despite an adverse season last year, due in large measure to war conditions in the area, the Society, at its annual general meeting, decided to carry on with its mission. The afternoon meetings at Kilmarnock have been discontinued and at Ayr, the starting time has reverted to seven o'clock, despite the fact that last buses leave the centre of the town at nine o'clock. Many members have therefore to walk long distances to their homes. To such enthusiasm the Council has replied by endeavouring to arrange outstanding programmes and much success has attended its efforts.

The season began on October 22nd with the first local showing of Donald Taylor's *Battle for Music* with *Malta G.C.*, and Sir Arnold Bax's special score in chief support. For the second of the season of ten performances *Le Dernier Tournant* has been secured, with Capra's *The Nazis Strike* and a Disney to fill the bill. The third performance sees a welcome return to the satisfying, but unusual, Boulting brothers' *Thunder Rock*, supported, it is hoped, by the American O.W.I. film *Toscanini*, while for the fourth meeting *Avalanche* will share the evening with *Divide and Conquer*. The last meeting of the first half of the season accedes to the requests to see *Citizen Kane* which have poured in, in the last six months. Opportunity will be taken at this meeting to include *Highland Doctor* as well as one of the earlier Disney's.

Will secretaries of other film societies not already on Ayrshire's mailing list, and who are willing to exchange programme notes, please notify the secretary, Arthur J. Nelson, 6 Hilary Crescent, Ayr?

Manchester and Salford Film Society

The fifteenth season of activities opened on September 24th, with the presentation of the Soviet feature *Jacob Sverdlov*, supported with *This is Tomorrow*, *Art and Life in Belgium* and *Tulips Shall Grow* (G. Pal).

The programme for October included *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *Calling Mr. Smith*, and *Children of the City*, and in November, Mr. George Wynn, the producer, will introduce *Men of Rochdale*, and the feature will be *Derriere La Facade*.

The Society's *Film Forum* for expressing and discussing viewpoints on the cinema, opened on October 14th, with an address by Mr. Reg. Cordwell on "Survey of Cinema". He was followed in November by Mr. Roland South, the Society's active chairman, who opened a discussion on "Film and Social Problems".

The Society has received considerable publicity as a result of its proposals sub-

mitted to Manchester's Post-War Reconstruction Committee, for a Civic Film Centre. Reprints of the article, "Why not a Civic Film Centre?" written by the Secretary for last February's issue, of *The Local Government Service*, may be had on request to R. Cordwell, Hon. Secretary, 31 Cringle Road, Manchester, 19.

The Workers' Film Association Limited

The Workers Film Association Ltd. has now completed its third year of operations as a registered Co-operative Society, with a record of progress highly satisfactory to the national federations in the Workers' Movement responsible for its management and policy.

During the year 1943-1944, over 1,500 film shows were given in various parts of the country with mobile cine-units and nearly 30,000 reels of films have been distributed.

Two films are in course of production, one for the Guildford Youth Council, entitled *This Precious Stone*, running time 40 minutes, and another, *Men of Rochdale*, of the Co-operative pageant play staged to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Rochdale Equitable Industrial Society. A film show is being arranged for delegates to the Trades Union Congress at Blackpool, at which Ealing Studios production, *They Came to a City*, which is the first great British feature film dealing with the mighty problems of human progress, will be shown, along with *Men of Rochdale* and *People to People*, which is an American film on the delegation of British workers to war-time America under the auspices of the T.U.C.

Plans are being discussed for the production of two films on Work for All and Houses for All. A memorandum on the establishment of a National Film Library has been submitted to the Deputy Prime Minister, and it is thought that the proposal has been favourably received.

Scottish Film Council

As is normally the case the summer period has been a comparatively quiet one; probably the most outstanding venture was the Film School organised by Scottish Youth Leaders Training Association at St. Andrews in August. As is the practice in Scotland the various bodies interested co-operated. In this case co-operation came from the Scottish Film Council, Scottish Educational Film Association, Fife Youth Committee and one of Scotland's leading film critics. As the result there took place a School which has been universally recognised as one of the best organised under S.Y.L.T.A. The course covered Projector Tuition in all its aspects, considerable

demonstration of films, discussions on the use of the film in the Club, and probably the most interesting feature, two visits to the cinema, one to view a routine programme, the second to consider a programme specially chosen. This feature of the School provided both enjoyment and instruction, and the programme chosen was a revelation to many of the youth leaders as to the possibility of the cinema.

Edinburgh Film Guild

Edinburgh Film Guild opened its fifteenth season with *Toscanini* and Duvivier's *The Heart of a Nation*. The second programme was *Circonstances Atténuantes* and *The Battle of Russia* while films announced for showing include *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki*, *Le Jour se Leve*, *Strange Incident*, *Welcome to Britain*, and a revival of *Un Carnet de Bal*.

A feature is to be made of Frank Capra's war surveys which are to be shown in a series of special programmes with British documentaries of the equivalent period. The aim is not only to give members an opportunity of seeing these "history books of to-morrow" but to discuss the methods used by Capra and his collaborators.

Last season's membership record has been broken and at the opening performance the Guild's chairman, Norman Wilson, had to announce that the membership roll had been closed. He also intimated the formation of a sister society, the Edinburgh Scientific Film Society, established as a result of the special performance of scientific films given by the Guild last season.

Belfast Film Institute Society

Belfast Film Institute Society, after a record season last year, is off to a good start with a programme for the coming season including *Derriere La Facade*, *My Universities*, *Le Bonheur* as the first three shows, *Le Jour Se Leve* and *Ils Etaient Neuf Celebataires* in prospect after Christmas, and further new releases to Northern Ireland to follow. The U.S. Army series *Why We Fight* (*Prelude to War*, *Divide and Conquer*, *The Nazis Strike*, *Battle of Britain*, etc.) will also be shown in sequence through the courtesy of Sir Basil Brooke, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, to whom copies have been presented by Mr. Winston Churchill.

A new departure is a projected series of 16-mm. shows of silent classics, starting with *Metropolis*.

Altogether an attractive programme has been arranged, and visitors to Northern Ireland seeking further information are invited to get into touch with the Secretary, Alfred Arnold, 6 College Green House, Belfast.

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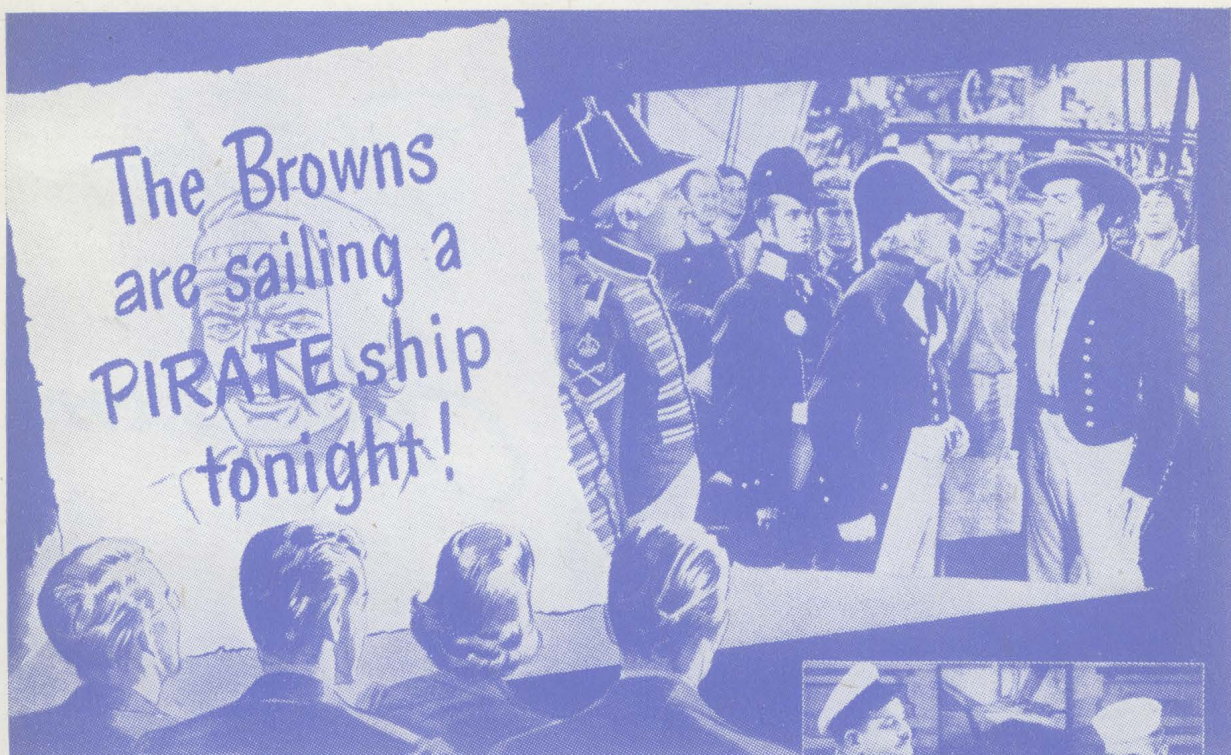
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